

PATENT

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APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT
for
METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR RECORDING ONE-STEP,
FULL-COLOR, FULL-PARALLAX, HOLOGRAPHIC STEREOGRAMS

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This application claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application No. 60/076237, filed February 27, 1998.

1. Background of the Invention

10 The present invention relates generally to the field of holography. More particularly, it concerns methods and devices for creating and printing variable size and variable resolution holographic stereograms and holographic optical elements using computer rendered images of three-dimensional computer models or using computer processed images.

15 A holographic stereogram is a type of hologram synthesized or composed from a set of two-dimensional views of a subject. A holographic stereogram is capable of creating the convincing illusion of a solid three-dimensional subject from closely spaced, discrete-perspective, two-dimensional component views. In addition, if the two-dimensional component views are properly generated, a holographic stereogram can also create the illusion of an animated image. Although holographic stereograms can project
20 such special effects, due to limitations in the methods and techniques for printing holographic stereograms, holographic stereograms have generally been expensive, difficult, and time consuming to produce.

25 Techniques have been developed for reducing the number of steps involved in producing holographic stereograms to one optical printing step. One-step technology usually involves using computer processed images of objects or computer models of objects to build a hologram from a number of contiguous, small, elemental pieces, known as elemental holograms or hogels. This one-step technology eliminates the need to create a preliminary hologram.

30 To produce a full-parallax, holographic stereogram using traditional one-step technology, a three-dimensional computer model of an object or a scene is created. There are numerous computer graphic modeling programs, rendering programs, animation programs, three dimensional digitalization systems, or combinations of the programs or systems that can be used to generate and manipulate a three-dimensional computer model of an object or a scene. Examples of such programs or systems include, but are not

5 limited to, computer-aided-design (CAD) programs, scientific visualization programs, and virtual reality programs.

In addition, to produce a holographic stereogram using one-step technology requires that the position of the hologram surface and individual elemental holograms relative to an object or a scene be determined. Furthermore, a proper computer graphic camera(s)'s description for an elemental hologram and the size and location of a spatial light modulator (SLM), a device that can display a two-dimensional image, need to be determined.

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15 Once all the aforementioned initial parameters are determined, a two-dimensional projection on the SLM for each elemental hologram is computed based on the computer graphic model of the object or scene that was created, the positions of the elemental holograms, and the computer graphic camera's description for the elemental holograms. The two-dimensional projection on the SLM for each elemental hologram may be rendered using various computer graphic techniques. The process of creating two-dimensional views from a three-dimensional object and adding qualities such as variations in color and shade to a computer graphic model is often referred to as rendering. There are numerous methods for rendering. One method is ray-tracing, which computes images by accurately simulating sampled light rays in a computer model. Another method is scan-line conversion, which computes images one raster or line at a time. Typically scan-line rendering does not produce as realistic results as ray tracing. However, scan-line rendering is frequently used in animation packages because it is faster. Another method for using computer graphics to render images for one-step, full-parallax holographic stereograms is described in an article by Halle and Kropp. Halle, M. and Kropp, A., "Fast Computer Graphics Rendering for Full Parallax Spatial Displays," *Proc. Soc. Photo-Opt. Instrum. Eng. (SPIE)*, 3011:105-112 (February 10-11, 1997), the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference.

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25
30 When holographic stereograms are produced by either the multi-step or one-step techniques, the reconstructed images may have geometric image distortions. These geometric image distortions may be very apparent, especially in large, billboard size

- 5 holographic displays or holographic displays in other geometries, such as an alcove or a partial cylinder.

One solution that has been incorporated into multi-step techniques to correct for geometric image distortions for multiplex holograms is discussed in an article by Okada. Okada, K., *et. al.*, "A Method of Distortion Compensation of Multiplex Holograms,"
10 *Optics Communications*, vol. 48, no. 3, pp. 167-170 (December 1, 1983), the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference. The technique discussed in Okada's article to correct distortion is a method to correct geometrical and time distortion of a single or monocular viewpoint of a finished hologram. Because it is a post-processing method that takes place after image acquisition, Okada's technique would be inefficient if adopted to
15 generate animated computer graphics for one-step, holographic stereograms. Moreover, Okada's method only produces horizontal-parallax-only transmission type holograms.

Others have developed techniques for pre-distorting one-step, holographic stereograms to reduce distortion in the final holographic display. One such pre-distortion technique is described in a paper by Halle and others. Halle, M. *et al.*, "The Ultragram: A
20 Generalized Holographic Stereogram," *Proc. Soc. Photo-Opt. Instrum. Eng. (SPIE)*, vol. 1461, Practical Holography V, p. 142 (February 1991), the disclosure of which is incorporated herein by reference. Although widely used, typical pre-distortion techniques for one-step methods for producing full-parallax, holographic stereograms are significantly limited by available computer processing speeds and the resolution of
25 images produced by traditional one-step methods. In addition, techniques for pre-distorting one-step, full-parallax, holographic stereograms have not been able to produce comprehensible, animated, one-step, full-parallax, holographic stereograms.

Apparatus for printing one-step, monochromatic, holographic-stereograms have been developed. Typically, such prior art printers, as depicted in FIG. 1, include: a
30 monochrome coherent light source 1, lenses 42, mirrors 40, an optical system 89, a shutter 10, a mechanism for translating film 69, holographic recording material 70, usually in the form of film, a personal computer 85 to control the timing for the exposure sequence, and a separate high-speed computer 87 for image calculations. The prior art

5 printer depicted in **FIG. 1**, was discussed in two articles by Yamaguchi. Yamaguchi, M., *et al.*, "Development of a Prototype Full-Parallax Holoprinter," *Proc. Soc. Photo-Opt. Instrum. Eng. (SPIE)*, vol. 2406, Practical Holography IX, pp. 50-56 (February 1995); and Yamaguchi, M., *et al.*, "High-Quality Recording of a Full-Parallax Holographic Stereogram with a Digital Diffuser," *Optics Letters*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 135-137 (January 10 20, 1994), the disclosures of each are incorporated herein by reference. The prior art printer depicted in **FIG. 1** is capable of producing monochromatic holographic stereograms, but not full-color holographic stereograms.

A typical prior art hologram printer, like the one depicted in **FIG. 1**, usually is supported by a vibration isolation table **80**. In addition, the prior art printer depicted by 15 **FIG. 1** uses a HeNe laser for a light source **1** that produces a coherent light beam **5** that may be collimated. A shutter **10** is placed at the output of light source **1**. A beam-splitter **15** splits the light **5** from the light source **1** into an object beam **20** and a reference beam **25**. The polarization of the object and reference beams **20**, **25** are adjusted by a pair of half-wave plates **30** and a pair of polarizers **35**. The half-wave plates **30** and polarizers **35** 20 also control the ratio of the beams. The prior art printer also uses a number of mirrors **40**. In addition, the prior art printer uses a system of enlarging lenses **42** to distribute the object beam **20** from the light source **1** into the optical system **89** depicted in **FIG. 1**.

The optical system **89** of the prior art printer of **FIG. 1** includes a band-limited diffuser **45**, a liquid crystal display panel (LCD panel) **50**, and a converging lens **55**. A 25 band-limited diffuser is a diffuser with a deterministic phase pattern designed to diffuse light in a specific pattern or direction. The band-limited diffuser **45** depicted in **FIG. 1** is specifically designed for the monochromatic light source being used -- a HeNe laser. The LCD panel **50** used in the prior art printer of **FIG. 1** is a gray scale, electrically addressed panel with twisted-nematic liquid crystals. The LCD panel **50** receives image 30 data calculated by a high-speed computer **87** by an analog video signal. The converging lens **55** shown in **FIG. 1** focuses the images from the LCD panel **50** to the holographic recording material **70**. The converging lens **55** generally has a low f-number in order to produce a wide angle of view. Due to the need to correct for spherical aberrations along

5 the optical axis. Yamaguchi utilized a converging lens 55 composed of three lenses to reduce spherical aberration and realize a f-number of around 0.8.

To prevent the exposure of parts of the holographic recording material 70 that are not part of the elemental hologram 110 meant to be exposed, the prior art printer of FIG. 1, uses, in close proximity to the holographic recording material 70, an object beam
10 masking plate 60 with an aperture the size of the elemental hologram 110 to prevent the object beam 20 from exposing other parts of the holographic recording material 70.

The band-limited diffuser 45 shown in FIG. 1 improves the uniformity of the distribution of the object beam 20 over an elemental hologram on the holographic recording material 70. If the band-limited diffuser 45 is designed such that an object
15 beam 20 is focused only over the area of an elemental hologram, then an object beam masking plate 60 is not needed to prevent exposure of areas outside the elemental hologram. However, if used with such a band-limited diffuser, the object beam masking plate 60 may have an aperture larger than the size of the elemental hologram 110. An object beam 20 and a band-limited diffuser 45 that allow even illumination of an
20 elemental hologram 110 by an object beam 20 need to be matched by a reference beam masking plate 65 with an aperture the size of the elemental hologram 110. Because the required matching of a object beam 20, a band-limited diffuser 45, and reference beam masking plate 65 to the size of a desired elemental hologram, it has been difficult to change the sizes of elemental holograms exposed by a hologram printer. Because of this
25 lack of flexibility, prior art printers cannot easily print holograms having different sizes of elemental holograms, and are restricted to printing holograms with single, fixed-sized elemental holograms.

FIGs. 2-4 illustrate alternative prior art embodiments of optical systems that function in the same way as the optical system 89 depicted in FIG. 1.

30 In FIGs. 2-4, an object beam 20 is directed through a SLM 90 that has a sample image point 100 on its surface. The object beam 20 may be normal to the SLM surface or off-axis from the normal. SLM 90 may also have an array of pixels 95. LCD panels, cinematography film, and transparencies have been used as SLMs 90.

5 In FIG. 2, the object beam is directed through a simple diffuser 105, such as a section of ground glass, that scatters light. When a simple diffuser 105 is used, then an object beam masking plate 60 must be used to prevent exposing areas of the holographic recording material 70 outside of the elemental hologram 110 that are not meant to be exposed.

10 In FIG. 3, an object beam 20 is directed through a holographic optical element (HOE) 115. A HOE is a hologram that is specially designed to redirect light emanating from a source in a certain way. For instance, a HOE may be designed to act as a lens to converge light to a single point. As another example, a HOE may be designed to act as a band-limited diffuser that is paired with a lens to converge light over an area rather than
15 at a single point. The HOE 115 depicted in FIG. 3 is one that is designed to evenly expose an area the size and shape of an elemental hologram 110. When such a HOE is used, an object beam masking plate 60 (shown in FIG. 2) need not be used at all or, if used, may have an aperture larger than the size of the elemental hologram 110 to be exposed.

20 In FIG. 4, an object beam 20 is directed through a band-limited diffuser, which may be a band-limited digital diffuser, 45 and a converging lens 55. The band-limited diffuser 45 depicted in FIG. 4 is designed to converge the object beam 20 over the area of elemental hologram 110. Thus, an object beam masking plate 60 (shown in FIG. 2) need not be used at all or, if used may have an aperture larger than the size of the
25 elemental hologram 110 to be exposed.

In FIGs. 2-4, the sample image point 100 is an image point of the SLM 90 that is recorded in an elemental hologram 110 on a holographic recording material 70. Reference beam 25 is directed at the elemental hologram 110 such that the interference pattern formed by the interaction of the object beam 20 and the reference beam 25 may be
30 recorded on the elemental hologram 110 on the holographic recording material 70.

To expose a two-dimensional array of elemental holograms, the prior art printer of FIG. 1 uses a mechanism for translating holographic film 69 that includes pulse controlled motors 71. Typically, the holographic recording material 70 in a prior art

5 printer is photographic film. The film is held between the object beam masking plate 60 and the reference beam masking plate 65. Both masking plates 60 and 65 have apertures that are the size of the elemental holograms 110 being exposed. The masking plates 60 and 65 are moved by a solenoid 72. Pulse controlled motors 71 translate the film in two directions.

10 In the prior art system depicted in FIG. 1, the timing of the exposure sequence is controlled by a personal computer. Thus, the solenoid 72, as well as the pulse controlled motors 71 and the shutter 10, are controlled by the personal computer 85. In contrast, the images for the exposures are calculated off-line by a high-speed computer 87. The image calculations are transferred by an analog video signal to the LCD panel 50.

15 For a holographic stereogram to be reconstructed, an illumination source must be placed at an appropriate angle. If the illumination source is not placed correctly, a holographic stereogram will not be reconstructed or will appear with distortions, such as magnification distortions. Despite advances in holographic techniques and equipment, the display illumination geometry of a one-step, holographic stereogram remains a
20 problem. The display illumination geometry, i.e., the placement of an illumination source with respect to a holographic stereogram, depends on the cumulative effect of the angles at which a reference beam exposed each of a holographic stereogram's elemental holograms. For example, if the angle at which all of the elemental holograms on a holographic stereogram are exposed to a collimated reference beam is constant, and if the
25 surface of the holographic stereogram is flat, then the holographic stereogram needs a collimated illumination source to illuminate each of the elemental holograms from the appropriate angle if the hologram is to be properly reconstructed without defects such as magnification distortion.

Furthermore, in practice, it has been common to create reflection holographic
30 stereograms which are meant to be illuminated with a diverging light source such as a point source. However, the prior art has not overcome the difficulty in designing a printer in which the angle of a reference beam is automatically and flexibly changeable to allow reconstruction by a point source and with minimal distortion.

5 In addition, it remains difficult to control the resolution or elemental hologram density of a holographic image. The sharpness of a holographic image depends on the image resolution and the extent of any blurring. Blurring can be caused by having a large illumination source, such as that of a long florescent light, illuminate a hologram. In addition, blurring can be caused by the large spectral spread of an illumination source. If
10 an illumination source that is small and monochromatic, such as a laser source expanded through a microscope objective lens (*i.e.* a small, inexpensive, achromatic, high-power lens), is used, blurring may be minimized, and the sharpness of the holographic image will mainly depend on the image resolution of the hologram.

The image resolution of a three-dimensional image is defined as the volumetric
15 density of individually distinguishable image points in an image volume. For one-step, holographic stereograms, including full-parallax and horizontal-parallax holograms, this resolution is usually not constant throughout an image volume. For small images of little depth, the variation of image resolution with depth is hardly noticeable. However, for holographic stereograms with significant depth, the variation in image resolution with
20 depth can be very apparent.

As shown in **FIG. 5**, if the light from an illumination source **130** that is the same type of light source as that which generated the reference beam **25** that exposed an elemental hologram **110** illuminates the elemental hologram **110** from the appropriate conjugate angle, the reconstruction **125** of the sample image point **100**, (shown in **FIGs.**
25 **2-4**), on the reconstruction **120** of the image of the SLM is formed at the same apparent distance and position relative to the elemental hologram **110** as it appeared to the elemental hologram **110** at the time of recording.

FIG. 6 shows lines drawn from the boundaries between neighboring elemental holograms **110** on a holographic recording material **70** through the boundaries between
30 neighboring reconstructed pixels **135** of the reconstructed image **120** of a SLM. The areas bounded between the lines drawn from the boundaries of at least two elemental holograms represent independently addressable volume elements, or voxels **140**. A voxel **140** is a component unit which represents an arbitrary three-dimensional object or scene.

5 Assuming that the elemental holograms 110 are larger than the SLM pixels, as shown in
FIG. 6, the sizes of the voxels 140 increase with increasing distance from the surface of
a reconstructed image of a SLM 120. If the sizes of the voxels 140 are too coarse relative
to the desired detail size of a three-dimensional object or scene, the reproduced image
will be poor or indiscernible. If the three-dimensional image of an object or scene
10 extends over a wide range of depth, a variation in the sizes of the voxels will also be very
undesirable because such a variation would lead to poor image quality.

Thus, hologram printers of the prior art have limitations that make them
impractical for commercial purposes. In particular, these prior art printers suffer from:
lack of ability to print full-color holographic stereograms; lack of ability to
15 simultaneously expose multiple elemental holograms; lack of flexibility to quickly and
easily adjust a hologram printer to print at different elemental hologram sizes; lack of
flexibility to easily change the angle of a reference beam to a holographic recording
material; lack of ability to control the resolution of a hologram; and lack of ability to
create computer generated images which display animation or different images with a
20 change of viewing position.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention overcomes many of the above-noted limitations and
problems of prior art hologram printers and methods used to print holographic
stereograms with the following structures and methods.

25 The present invention is an apparatus and method for printing one-step, full-color,
full-parallax holographic stereograms utilizing a reference beam-steering system that
allows a reference beam to expose a holographic recording material from different angles.
More particularly, a coherent beam is split into object and reference beams. The object
beam passes through an object beam unit in which a rendered image is displayed, while
30 the reference beam passes through the reference beam-steering system. The object and
reference beams interfere with each other at an elemental hologram on a holographic
recording material. A computer controls the exposure time and the movement of the
recording material and may also render the images displayed in the object beam unit. In

5 addition, the computer may also store the images before they are displayed in the object beam unit.

In addition, the present invention may also utilize a voxel-control lens placed in the path of the object beam and in close proximity to the holographic recording material to control the resolution of a holographic stereogram.

10 In addition, the present invention may also utilize interchangeable band-limited diffusers and reference-beam masking plates.

Furthermore, the present invention incorporates viewing zone techniques to the rendering process for one-step, holographic stereograms to produce animated, one-step, holographic stereograms.

15 In accordance with long-standing patent law convention, the words "a" and "an" when used in this application, including the claims, denotes "at least one."

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The following drawings form part of the specification and are included to further demonstrate certain aspects of the present invention. The invention may be better
20 understood by reference to one or more of these drawings in combination with the detailed description of specific embodiments presented herein.

FIGs. 1(a) and (b) are schematic, top-view drawings of a prior art hologram printer.

FIGs. 2(a) and (b) are simplified, top-view illustrations of a one-step, reflection,
25 elemental hologram recording using an optical system including a simple diffuser.

FIG. 3 is a simplified, top-view illustration of a one-step, reflection, elemental hologram recording using an optical system including a holographic optical element.

FIG. 4 is a simplified, top-view illustration of a one-step, reflection, elemental hologram recording using an optical system including a band-limited diffuser and a
30 converging lens.

FIG. 5 is a simplified, top-view illustration of the reconstruction of an elemental hologram of a holographic stereogram.

5 **FIG. 6** is an illustration of the changes in sizes of voxels with distance from a reconstructed image of a SLM.

FIG. 7 is a top-view, schematic drawing of one embodiment of the present invention for a one-step, full-color, full-parallax printer for holographic stereograms.

FIG. 8 is a top-view, schematic drawing of another embodiment of the present
10 invention for a one-step, full-color, full-parallax printer for holographic stereograms.

FIG. 9 is an illustration of a particular embodiment of the present invention to control the variation in sizes of voxels.

FIGs. 10(a) and (b) illustrate how the apparent distance of a SLM, as seen by an elemental hologram, may change when a voxel-control lens is utilized.

15 **FIG. 11** is an illustration of voxel boundary lines that are approximately parallel to each other.

FIG. 12 is a schematic illustration of an embodiment of the reference beam-steering system of the present invention.

FIG. 13 is a schematic illustration of another embodiment of the reference beam-
20 steering system of the present invention.

FIG. 14 is a schematic illustration of an embodiment of the reference beam-steering system of the present invention that utilizes a beam-steering aperture.

FIG. 15 is an orthogonal-view illustration of an embodiment of the beam-steering mirror system of the present invention.

25 **FIG. 16** is a front-view illustration of another embodiment of the beam-steering mirror system of the present invention.

FIG. 17 is a schematic illustration of an embodiment of the reference beam-steering system of the present invention that utilizes fiber optics and a translation system.

FIG. 18 is a simplified, orthogonal-view illustration of an embodiment of the
30 reference beam-steering system of the present invention that utilizes fiber optics and a translation system.

5 **FIG. 19** is a simplified, orthogonal-view illustration of an embodiment of a reference beam-steering system of the present invention that utilizes fiber optics, a translation system, and an optical combiner unit.

FIG. 20 is a schematic illustration of an object beam unit of the present invention that utilizes fiber optics.

10 **FIG. 21** is a top-view, schematic drawing of one embodiment, which utilizes fiber optics, of the present invention for a one-step, full-color, full-parallax printer for holographic stereograms.

FIG. 22 is a simplified, orthogonal-view illustration of an embodiment of a material holder of the present invention.

15 **FIG. 23** is a schematic illustration of an embodiment of the present invention with fixed object beam units and fixed reference beam-steering systems.

FIG. 24 is a schematic illustration of an embodiment of the present invention with mobile object beam units and mobile reference beam-steering systems.

FIG. 25 is a schematic illustration of another embodiment of the present invention with mobile object beam units and mobile reference beam-steering systems.

FIG. 26 is a schematic illustration of yet another embodiment of the present invention with mobile object beam units and mobile reference beam-steering systems.

FIGs. 27(a), (b), and (c) are orthogonal-view illustrations of removable band-limited diffusers and removable reference beam masking plates.

25 **FIG. 28** is a flow chart illustrating the steps for creating an animated, one-step, full-parallax holographic stereogram.

FIG. 29 is an illustration of viewing zones for a holographic stereogram that displays different images when viewed from different viewing zones.

FIG. 30 is an illustration of rays projecting from the perimeter of viewing zones.

30 **FIG. 31** is an illustration of viewing zone mask volumes.

DESCRIPTION OF ILLUSTRATIVE EMBODIMENTS

The following examples are included to demonstrate illustrative embodiments of the present invention. It should be appreciated by those with skill in the art that the

5 techniques disclosed in the following examples represent techniques discovered by the
inventors to function well in practice, and thus can be considered to constitute exemplary
modes for its practice. However, those with skill in the art will, in light of the present
disclosure, appreciate that many changes can be made in the specific embodiments which
are disclosed and still obtain a like or similar result without departing from the spirit and
10 scope of the invention. For instance, a HOE or other appropriate optics may replace the
combination of a lens and a band-limited diffuser. In addition, a HOE may also replace a
lens or a combination of lenses. Furthermore, SLMs may include, but are not limited to
LCD panels, digital micro-mirror arrays, film, or transparencies. In addition, computer
storage devices may include, but are not limited to hard disks, static or dynamic RAM,
15 flash memory, DVD drives, or tape drives. Moreover, motors may include, but are not
limited to DC servo motors, stepper motors, or actuators.

The present invention provides a system and method for printing one-step, full-
color, full-parallax holographic stereograms. Some presently illustrated embodiments are
depicted in **FIGs. 7-31**.

20 One embodiment of the present invention for a printer is illustrated in **FIG. 7**. As
depicted in **FIG. 7**, most of the parts of the printer, except for a computer **230** and
controllers **305** and **455**, are isolated from vibrations by, for example, being supported on
vibration isolation table **80**. The table **80** may be composed of steel with a honeycomb
interior. The legs of the table **80** may be air pistons which can absorb vibrations. Other
25 types of vibration isolation may also be acceptable. In some embodiments, the computer
230 and controllers **305** and **455** may be supported on table **80**. The computer **230** may
have multiple ports and serial or parallel cables through which the computer **230** can
control devices, like motor controllers, or through which the computer **230** can send
output, such as images. In addition, computer **230** may have computational power and
30 speed sufficient for three-dimensional computer graphics. Furthermore, computer **230**
may include one or more central processing unit and may include one or more storage
devices, for example, hard disks, a redundant array of independent disks, FLASH
memory, or static or dynamic RAM, in which rendered images are stored. If more than
one central processing unit is used, they may operate independently or in parallel. If

5 more than one storage device is used, they may also operate independently or in parallel. In some embodiments, lasers 200 are not supported by table 80. The lasers 200 may be lasers of three different colors. For example, one laser 200 may be a krypton ion or a HeNe laser to produce a red beam of light, another laser 200 may be an argon ion or a YAG laser to produce a green beam of light, and a third laser 200 may be an argon ion or a
10 a HeCd laser to produce a blue beam of light. Other light wavelengths are also acceptable. In addition, lasers 200 may be solid state diodes or other types of lasers. The beams of light from the lasers 200 may go through open air. In addition, the beams of light from the lasers 200 may go through pipes so that instabilities due to air currents will be reduced. Also, the beams may be transmitted through polarization-preserving optical
15 fibers.

In FIG. 7, the coherent light beams 5 produced by the lasers 200 are directed at variable beam splitters 205. Variable beam splitters are half-mirrors that split a beam by reflecting part of the beam and transmitting most of the rest of the beam. If fiber optics are used to transmit beams, then fiber optic beam splitters that work by contacting two
20 parallel fibers together and letting the light from the fibers couple may be used. The coherent light beam 5 from each of the lasers 200 is split into two beams, an object beam 20 and a reference beam 25. In some embodiments, each object beam 20 and each reference beam 25 may be directed through half-wave plates 30 and polarizers 35. In other embodiments, if polarization-retaining fiber optic cables are used to transmit a
25 beam and if the cables are rotatable about their center axes, half-wave plates 30 need not be used. If needed, each object beam may be reflected off one or more mirror 40. The mirrors 40 of the present invention may be, for example, first surface or front surface mirrors. Each object beam 20 may be directed through a low pass spatial filter 220 to remove unwanted noise. A low pass spatial filter 220 may include a microscope
30 objective lens and a pinhole. Each object beam 20 may then pass through a beam shutter 225. In one embodiment, the beam shutters 225 may be high-speed, mechanical iris shutters, for example, those used in made the photography industry. In other embodiments, the beam shutters 225 may be electro-optical systems such as liquid crystal cells or acousto-optical modulator crystals. In another embodiment, instead of using

5 separate beam shutters 225, the SLM 90 in the object beam unit, generally 700, can function as a shutter for all three object beams. The shutters 225 are controlled by the computer 230. The object beams 20 may be then directed through an object beam unit 700. In the object beam unit 700, the object beams 20 may be directed such that the object beams 20 converge at the plane of a SLM 90. SLM 90 may include, but is not
10 limited to, a transmissive LCD panel, a reflective LCD panel, an optically addressed LCD panel, a digital micro-mirror array, film, a projection or a transparency. The SLM 90 may receive image input by a video cable from the computer 230. In addition, multiple SLMs may receive images generated in parallel by multiple central processing units. Moreover, multiple SLMs may receive images from the storage device or devices of
15 computer 230. After passing through the SLM 90, the object beam 20 may pass through a HOE 115, or another system, like those illustrated in FIGs. 2-4, that is designed to converge the object beam and evenly expose an area the size of an elemental hologram. In one implementation, the HOE 115 may be a transmission-type hologram that can converge three different monochromatic object beams at slightly different angles onto the
20 elemental holograms to be exposed without allowing zeroth-ordered light from any of the object beams to intersect the elemental holograms to be exposed. After passing through the object beam unit 700, the object beam 20 may then be transmitted through a voxel control lens 500 and may then expose an elemental hologram 110 on a holographic recording material 70 in a material holder 300. The holographic recording material 70
25 may be, but is not limited to, a pan-chromatic photopolymer, a pan-chromatic or monochromatic silver halide photographic emulsion, dichromated gelatin, or other suitable photopolymers. The holographic recording material 70 may be held securely by a material holder 300 that may be able to translate the holographic recording material in two directions. The movement of the material holder 300 may be controlled by film
30 holder motor controller 305 which may be controlled by computer 230.

As further depicted in FIG. 7, after the beams are split into object beams 20 and reference beams 25 by the variable beam splitters 205, each of the reference beams 25 passes through a variable attenuator 210 which allows the intensity of each reference beam 25 to be independently adjusted. The reference beams may be reflected off of a

5 mirror 40 before passing through dichroic combiners 215 or other suitable optical
combiners. A dichroic combiner is a wavelength selective mirror which reflects some
wavelengths, but is transparent to other wavelengths. The dichroic combiners 215 in
FIG. 7 combine the three reference beams 25 into one beam which may then pass
10 through a beam shutter 225 before passing through a low pass spatial filter 220. The
reference beam 25 then passes through a reference beam steering system 400 which
controls the angle which the reference beam 25 intersects with the holographic recording
material 70. A beam-steering mirror system of the reference beam-steering system is
controlled by a mirror system motor controller 455 that is controlled by computer 230.

15 Furthermore, the present invention allows separate elemental holograms to be
printed in different colors. For instance, by placing a beam shutter in the path of each
object beam and reference beam and then selectively closing the beam shutters, one
elemental hologram may be exposed to only red object and reference beams, another may
be exposed to only green object and reference beams, and another may be exposed to
only blue object and reference beams.

20 An embodiment of the present invention in which multiple elemental holograms
are simultaneously exposed is depicted in FIG. 8. The beams from lasers 200 are split by
variable beam splitters 205 and then after being reflected by mirrors 40 are split again by
additional variable beam splitters 205, thereby forming two or more object beams 20 and
two or more reference beams 25 from each laser 200. In other embodiments, the beams
25 from lasers 200 may be split even more times to form more object beams 20 and more
reference beams 25. Each object beam 20 passes through a low pass filter 220 and a
beam shutter 225. Each set of three object beams 20 may be reflected by mirrors 40 and
pass through a SLM 90, a HOE 115, and a voxel control lens 500 to expose an elemental
hologram 110 on a holographic recording material 70 held by a material holder 300. The
30 movement of the material holder 300 is controlled by film holder motor controllers that
are controlled by computer 230. Each set of three reference beams 25 passes through
variable attenuators 210 and are combined into a beam by a dichroic combiner 215 or
other suitable optical combiners. Each of the resulting two reference beams 25 passes
through a beam shutter 225 and a low pass spatial filter 220. Each reference beam 25

5 then passes through a beam-steering system 400 before hitting an elemental hologram 110. Thus, as depicted in FIG. 8, multiple elemental holograms may be simultaneously printed.

10 An embodiment of the present invention in which the variation in voxel size is controlled is illustrated by FIGs. 9 and 10. As shown in FIGs. 9 and 10, this control is accomplished by placing a voxel-control lens 500 in the path of an object beam 20 between SLM 90 and holographic recording material 70. The voxel-control lens 500 may be placed in close proximity to holographic recording material 70. The voxel-control lens 500 may be capable of making an SLM or a projected image of a SLM seen from the viewpoint of an elemental hologram 110 appear at a greater apparent distance relative to
15 the holographic recording material 70 during recording, so that a sample image point 100 on the SLM 90 surface is reconstructed at a greater distance away from the holographic recording material 70. FIG. 10(a) illustrates how an image 505 of a SLM may appear to an elemental hologram 110 in a printer without a voxel-control lens. FIG. 10(b) illustrates how an image 505 of a SLM may appear to an elemental hologram in a printer
20 with a voxel-control lens 500. As shown in FIG. 10, the voxel control lens magnifies the image 505 of a SLM, such that the angle α subtended by the image does not change but the angle ϕ subtended by an elemental hologram decreases to θ when a voxel control lens is used. The distance between the image 505 of a SLM and the holographic recording material 70 may be varied by varying the focal length of the voxel-control lens 500 or its
25 position between the holographic recording surface 70 and the converging lens 55 or other optical systems, including simple diffusers or HOEs, as shown in FIGs. 1-3, used in the prior art to converge light onto the holographic recording material 70. In some embodiments, the voxel control lens 500 may be part of the object beam unit 700.

30 In one particular embodiment of this invention, it is possible to make the voxel sizes fairly constant over a wide range of distances from a holographic recording material 70. This is accomplished by choosing a voxel-control lens 500 with a focal length equal to the distance between the voxel-control lens 500 and the actual location of the SLM or the location of a projected image of the SLM as seen by an elemental hologram in a

5 printer without a voxel-control lens. Such a voxel-control lens 500 and geometrical layout will effectively reconstruct the SLM 120 at an infinite distance relative to holographic recording material 70. If the size of the pixels 95 on a SLM 90 are small compared to the size of the elemental holograms 110, the voxel 140 boundary lines for such an embodiment will no longer intersect close to the holographic recording material 10 70 as depicted in FIG. 6, but instead become approximately parallel lines which extend out to a great distance without intersecting as shown in FIG. 11.

Although the characteristics of a voxel-control lens 500 may depend on the desired results, typically it is desirable for the voxel-control lens 500 to be achromatic and have an f-number of around 3.0 or lower. In one particular embodiment, the voxel- 15 control lens may be achromatic and have an f-number of 2.4. In other embodiments, the voxel-control lens may have lower f-numbers, such as 0.5. Lower f-numbers are desirable because they allow for a wider angle of view. In yet other embodiments, the voxel-control lens may be monochromatic.

FIG. 12 depicts yet another embodiment of the present invention. Referring to 20 FIGS. 12-16, a reference beam-steering system, generally 400, may use a beam-steering mirror system 450 to direct a reference beam 25, through a first beam-steering lens 410 and a second beam-steering lens 405 to an elemental hologram 110 on a holographic recording material 70 which, if desired, may be inclined with respect to the normal to the center axis 420.

25 The beam-steering mirror system, generally 450, may be embodied in various ways. One particular embodiment is depicted in FIG. 15. In FIG. 15, a deflection mirror 460 is fixedly mounted to a first rotatable mount 465, such that when the first rotatable mount 465 rotates, the deflection mirror 460 rotates about a first axis 451 which passes through center point 461 of the deflection mirror 460. A motor for the first rotatable 30 mount 470, which is controlled by a motor controller 455, rotates the first rotatable mount 465. The motor for the first rotatable mount 470 is fixedly attached to a support 475. First rotatable mount 465 is rotatably mounted to a support 475 with bearings or bushings to allow the first rotatable mount 465 to rotate about the first axis 451. Support 475 is fixedly mounted by an attaching device on a second rotatable mount 480 such that when

5 the second rotatable mount 480 rotates, the deflection mirror 460 rotates about a second axis 452 which passes through the center point 461 of the deflection mirror 460 and which is orthogonal to the first axis 451. A motor for the second rotatable mount 485, which is controlled by a motor controller 455, rotates the second rotatable mount 480. The motor for the second rotatable mount may be fixedly attached to a vibration isolation
10 table 80. The motors for the first and second rotatable mounts, 470 and 485, may be, but are not limited to, stepper motors or DC servo motors. The same or a separate motor controller 455 controlled by computer 230 may control the motors for the first and second rotatable mounts 470 and 480.

Another embodiment of a beam-steering mirror system 450 is a deflection mirror
15 attached to a gimbal mount. In FIG. 16, a deflection mirror 460 is fixedly mounted to a first axle 490 such that the deflection mirror 460 rotates about a first axis 451 which passes through the center point 461 of the deflection mirror 460. First axle 490 is rotated by a motor 491 for the first axle which is controlled by a motor controller 455. The motor 491 for the first axle is fixedly attached to a first gimbal mount 494. First axle 490
20 is rotatably mounted by bearing or bushing to the first gimbal mount 494. The first gimbal mount 494 is fixedly mounted by an attaching device to a second axle 492 at the opposite ends of a diameter of the first gimbal mount 494 that coincides with a second axis 452. Second axle 492 is rotated by a motor 493 for the second axle and is controlled by a motor controller 455. The deflection mirror 460 rotates about the second axis 452
25 which passes through the center point 461 of the deflection mirror 460 and which is orthogonal to the first axis 451. Second axle 492 is rotatably mounted by bearing or bushing to a second gimbal mount 496. The motors 491 and 493, for the first and second axles, 491 and 493, may be, but are not limited to, stepper motors or DC servo motors. The same or separate motor controllers 455, controlled by a computer 230, may control
30 the motors for the first and second axles, 491 and 493.

As shown in FIGs. 12-16, the center axis 420 of the beam-steering lenses 405, 410 intersects the first axis 451 and the second axis 452 and passes through the center of an elemental hologram. A reference beam 25 may be directed at the center point 461 of the deflection mirror 460. A computer 230 controls the mirror system motor controller or

5 controllers 455 of the beam-steering mirror system 450, such that a reference beam 25
reflected off the deflection mirror 460 hits an elemental hologram 110 on a holographic
recording material 70 at a desired angle. The deflection mirror 460 may be placed at a
distance of one focal length 411 of the first beam-steering lens away from a first beam-
steering lens 410. The first beam-steering lens 410 may be placed at a distance of the
10 sum of the focal length 411 of the first beam-steering lens and the focal length 406 of the
second beam-steering lens away from the second beam-steering lens 405. The second
beam-steering lens 405 may be placed at a distance of one focal length 406 of the second
beam-steering lens, away from the holographic recording material 70. The beam-steering
system 400 of the present invention allows the reference beam 25 to be steered to
15 intersect with elemental holograms 110 at different angles.

In another embodiment, depicted in FIG. 13, the beam-steering system 400 of the
present invention may include a reference-beam converging lens 415 which may be
achromatic or monochromatic. After a reference beam 25 passes through the reference-
beam converging lens 415, the reference beam 25 is reflected by a beam-steering mirror
20 system 450 before passing through beam-steering lenses 410 and 405. The first and
second beam-steering lenses 410, 405 are placed such that the reference beam 25 that
passes through the converging lens and the first beam-steering lens 410 converges in the
focal plane 425 of the second beam-steering lens 405. In addition, the center point 461
shown in FIGs. 15 and 16 of a deflection mirror 460 shown in FIGs. 15 and 16 is located
25 at a distance of one focal length 411 of the first beam-steering lens from the first beam-
steering lens 410. Furthermore, the elemental hologram 110 to be exposed is located at a
distance of one focal length of the second beam-steering lens 406 away from the second
beam-steering lens 305.

In another embodiment, depicted in FIG. 14, the beam steering system 400 of the
30 present invention may include a beam-steering aperture 430 which eliminates the need to
have a reference beam masking plate. In an embodiment, a reference beam 25 passes
through a beam-steering aperture 430 that has the aperture of the area of the elemental
hologram 110 to be exposed. If the reference beam passes through lenses that magnify or
minify it, then the beam-steering aperture 430 should be sized such that the cross-section

5 of the reference beam that intersects the elemental hologram to be exposed has the same size and shape of the elemental hologram. The reference beam 25 then passes through two aperture relay lenses 435, is reflected off of a deflection mirror 460 (shown in FIGs. 15 and 16) of the beam-steering mirror system 450, passes through the first beam-steering lens 410, passes through the second beam-steering lens 405, and then intersects
10 the elemental hologram 110 to be exposed. The beam-steering aperture 430 is placed at a distance of one focal length 436 of the aperture relay lenses from one aperture relay lens 435. The aperture relay lenses 435 are located two focal lengths 436 of the aperture relay lens away from each other. Then the center point 461 (shown in FIGs. 15 and 16) of the deflection mirror 460 (shown in FIGs. 15 and 16) is located at a distance of one focal
15 length 436 of the aperture relay lens away from the second aperture lens 435 that the reference beam passes through.

Another embodiment of a reference beam-steering system 400 is illustrated by FIGs. 17, 18, and 21. In this embodiment, an optical coupler lens 670 channels a reference beam 25 that has just passed through a beam shutter to the fiber optic end 660
20 of a fiber optic cable 650. The fiber optic cable 650 delivers the reference beam 25 to a fiber optic tip 655 which is placed in the focal plane 425 of a second beam-steering lens 405. The reference beam 25 passes through a beam-steering lens 405 to an elemental hologram 110. The beam-steering lens 405 is located at a distance of one focal length 406 of the second beam-steering lens from the elemental hologram 110 being exposed.
25 The fiber optic tip 655 is translated by a translation system, generally 600.

FIG. 19 illustrates another embodiment of the reference beam-steering system 400. In this embodiment, three reference beams 25 which may each be a different color are channeled by three optical coupler lenses 670 toward three fiber optic ends 660 of three fiber optic cables 650. The fiber optic cables 650 deliver the reference beams 25 to
30 fiber optic tips 655 to direct the reference beams 25 into optical combiner unit 640. Optical combiner unit 640 may have two dichroic combiners 215, which may combine the three reference beams 25 into a single reference beam 25, other suitable optical combiners. The optical combiner unit 640 is placed in the focal plane 425 (shown in FIG. 17) of a beam-steering lens 405. The single reference beam 25 from the optical

5 combiner unit 640 passes through the beam-steering lens 405 to an elemental hologram 110. The beam-steering lens 405 is located at a distance of one focal length 406 of the beam-steering lens from the elemental hologram 110 being exposed. The optical combiner unit 640 is fixedly mounted to a platform 630 which is fixedly mounted to a second movable support 622.

10 In another embodiment, three reference beams 25 are transmitted by fiber optic cables 650 to a optical combiner unit 640. The single reference beam 25 that is output from the optical combiner unit 640 is channeled by an optical coupler lens 670 into a single fiber optic cable 650 which is attached to and carried by an attaching device to a translation system 600. The fiber optic tip 655 of the single fiber optic cable 650 is
15 located in a focal plane 425 of a beam-steering lens 405.

In still another embodiment, the three reference beams 25 are transmitted by fiber optic cables 650 to a optical combiner unit 640. The single reference beam 25 that is output from the optical combiner unit 640 passes through a beam shutter 225 before it is channeled by an optical coupler lens 670 into a single fiber optic cable 650 which is
20 fixedly attached to a translation system 600. The fiber optic tip 655 of the fiber optic cable 650 is located in a focal plane 425 of a beam-steering lens 405.

The translation system 600, as depicted in FIG. 18 and FIG. 19, is able to translate in two orthogonal directions. The translation system includes a x-translation stage and a y-translation stage.

25 One illustrative embodiment of a x-translation stage 680 includes a first lead screw 602 which is rotatably mounted by bushing, bearing, or other rotatable means to first end plates 608, and which may be rotated about the axis 601 of the first lead screw by a motor 604 for the first lead screw which is fixedly mounted to one of the first end plates 608. Two first guide bars 610 are fixedly mounted to the first end plates 608 such
30 that the first guide bars 610 lie parallel to the axis of the first lead screw 601. The two first guide bars 610 pass through two holes in a first movable support 612. The first lead screw 602 is threaded through a hole in the first movable support 612. Thus, in this embodiment of the x-translation stage 680, when the first lead screw 602 is rotated by the

5 motor 604 for the first lead screw, the first movable support 612 will move along the axis 601 of the first lead screw.

One illustrative embodiment of a y-translation stage 680 includes a second lead screw 618 which is rotatably mounted by bushing, bearing, or other rotatable means to second end plates 614, and which may be rotated about the axis 617 of the second lead screw 618 by a motor 620 for the second lead screw which is mounted to one of the second end plates 614. The other of the second end plates 614 is mounted to the first movable support 612 such that the axis 617 of the second lead screw is orthogonal to the axis 601 of the first lead screw. Two second guide bars 616 are fixedly mounted to the second end plates 614 such that the second guide bars 616 lie parallel to the axis 617 of the second lead screw. The two second guide bars 616 pass through two holes in a second movable support 622. The second lead screw 618 is threaded through a hole in the second movable support 622. Thus, in this embodiment of the y-translation device 690, when the second lead screw 618 is rotated by the motor for the second lead screw 620, the second movable support 622 will move along the axis 617 of the second lead screw.

The motors 604 and 620, for the first and second lead screws which may be, but are not limited to stepper, DC servo or linear motors, may be controlled by a motor controller 606 for the motors for the lead screws which may be controlled by computer 230.

25 Although the types, focal lengths, and number of beam-steering lenses may be varied, for some embodiments, it may be desirable for the beam-steering lenses to be achromatic and have f-numbers of around 3.0 or less. In other embodiments, it may be desirable for the beam-steering lenses to be achromatic, confocal, f- θ lenses, which are also known as flat-field laser-scan lenses. In some embodiments, it may also be desirable to have lenses of lower f-number to allow for a wider range of reference beams. In one particular embodiment, it may be desirable to have the beam-steering lenses be achromatic and have f-numbers of around 1.0. In addition, the beam-steering lenses may be monochromatic in other embodiments.

5 The beam-steering system of the present invention may be utilized to create holographic stereograms that display a particular image when illuminated by an illumination source from one angle, but display another image when illuminated by an illumination source from another angle. For instance, after exposing an elemental hologram with an object beam conditioned with a particular image on an SLM and a reference beam at a particular angle, the elemental hologram may then be exposed to an object beam conditioned with another image on the SLM and a reference beam at another angle. In addition, a set of elemental holograms on a holographic recording material may be exposed by a reference beam at a particular angle, while another set of elemental holograms may be exposed by a reference beam at another angle. Thus, a printer of this invention can create a holographic stereogram that displays a different image depending on the angle of the illumination source. Furthermore, the same printer with a beam-steering system may be used to create multiple holographic stereograms, each with a different reference angle, such that the images of each will only appear when illuminated by an illumination source at the correct angle. If such multiple holographic stereograms are mounted on top of each other, then different images may be displayed by simply changing the angle at which the illumination source intersects the holographic recording materials.

Another embodiment of the present invention, illustrated by **FIG. 20**, utilizes multiple SLMs **90** to produce full-color holographic stereograms. In **FIG. 20**, two dichroic combiners **215** in an "x" configuration, or other suitable optical combiners, may be used in combination with three object beams **20**, one object beam being red light, the other green light, and the other blue light. The three object beams **20** may be directed through three separate gray-scale SLMs **90**. In one embodiment of the present invention the SLMs are LCD panels of high resolution such as $1,280 \times 1,024$ pixels where the total size of the LCD panel is approximately $10\text{cm} \times 10\text{cm}$. However, smaller LCD panels may be used. For instance, LCD panels with the same or fewer number of pixels but that are around $2\text{cm} \times 2\text{cm}$ in size or smaller may be used.

5 In an embodiment shown in FIG. 20 and FIG. 21, after passing through beam
shutters 225, object beams 20 are directed through optical coupler lenses 670 to converge
at fiber optic ends 660. The object beams 20 are then transmitted by fiber optic cables
650 to the fiber optic tips 655 which are placed in the focal planes of singlet lenses 705.
The object beams 20 may pass through the singlet lenses 705, if necessary, reflect off
10 mirrors 40, and pass through SLMs 90 and band-limited diffusers 45, which may be color
specific. The singlet lenses 705 expand and collimate the object beams 20 such that the
object beams 20 may more evenly illuminate the SLMs 90. The object beams 20 are then
directed through a optical combiner unit 640 that may use two dichroic combiners 215 in
an "x" configuration, or other suitable optical combiners, to combine the three object
15 beams 20 into a single beam. The single object beam 20 may then pass through a first
projection lens 715 and a Fourier transform filter 710 that may remove undesired effects
such as, but not limited to, high frequency image components such as pixel or grid
artifacts that resulted from an SLM display with pixels. The object beam 20 may then
pass through a second projection lens 720 and then a converging lens 55. The first
20 projection lens 715 is located such that images of the SLMs all lie in the focal plane of
the first projection lens. The Fourier transform filter 710 is located in the focal planes of
both the first projection lens and the second projection lens. The converging lens 55 is
located such that its focal plane intersects the holographic recording material 70 at the
elemental hologram 110 to be exposed. In other embodiments of the object beam unit
25 700, the first and second projection lenses 715 and 720 and the Fourier transform filter
710 are not used. In still other embodiments of the object beam unit 700, a voxel control
lens 500 may be included in the object beam unit 700 and lie in close proximity to the
holographic recording material 70.

In one embodiment of the present invention, a material holder, generally 300, may
30 be used to translate holographic recording material 70. As depicted in FIGs. 22-25, a
material holder 300 may include a frame 324 attached to a x-translation stage 680 that is
attached to a y-translation stage 690.

An embodiment of the y-translation stage 680, as depicted in FIGs. 22-25, may
have first holder end plates 302 to which first holder guide rods 306 are fixedly attached.

5 A first holder lead screw 308 and a first holder driven lead screw 309 are rotatably attached by bushing or bearing or other suitable means to the first holder end plates 302. The first holder lead screw 308 and the first holder guide rods 306 are parallel to the axis of the first holder driven lead screw 307. The first holder driven lead screw 309 may be rotated by a motor 310 for the first holder driven lead screw, which is controlled by
10 holder motor controller 305, which is controlled by computer 230. The motor 310 may also drive both lead screws 308 and 309 with a timing belt or other linkage. In addition, two motors 310, each coupled to a lead screw, may drive the lead screws. The first holder driven lead screw 309 passes through a threaded hole in the a first holder movable support 312. The two first holder guide rods 306 in close proximity to the first holder
15 driven lead screw 309 pass through holes in the same first holder movable support 312. The first holder lead screw 308 passes through a threaded hole in another first holder movable support 312, and the two first holder guide rods 306 in close proximity to the first holder lead screw 308 pass through holes in the same first holder movable support 312.

20 An embodiment of the x-translation stage 680, as depicted in FIGs. 22-26, may have a second holder lead screw 318 and a first holder driven lead screw 319 rotatably attached by bushing or bearing or other suitable means to second holder end plates 314. The axis of the second holder driven lead screw 317 is orthogonal to the axis of the first holder driven lead screw 307. The second holder lead screw 318 and the second holder
25 guide rods 316 are parallel to the axis of the second holder driven lead screw 317. The second holder driven lead screw 319 may be rotated by a motor 320, for the second holder driven lead screw which is controlled by holder motor controller 305, which is controlled by computer 230. The second holder driven lead screw 319 passes through a threaded hole in the a second holder movable support 322. The two second holder guide
30 rods 316 in close proximity to the second holder driven lead screw 319 pass through holes in the same second holder movable support 322. The second holder lead screw 318 passes through a threaded hole in another second holder movable support 322, and the two second holder guide rods 316 in close proximity to the second holder lead screw 318 pass through holes in the same second holder movable support 322.

5 As depicted in FIGs. 22 and 23, the x-translation stage 680 may be mounted to the y-translation stage 690. In one embodiment, the first holder movable supports 312 are fixedly mounted to the second holder end plates 314. The second holder movable supports 322 are fixedly attached to a frame 324. A second frame 324 may be clamped to a first frame 324 by detachable couplings 325 which may include, but are not limited to, 10 clamps, snaps, screws, and bolts. A holographic recording material may be held in between two detachably coupled frames 324. In an alternative embodiment, the natural adhesive property of a holographic recording material may hold the material on one side of a transparent plate that is secured to frames 324. The frames 324 may be composed of stress-relieved aluminum, titanium, composites, or other rigid, strong, and lightweight 15 materials.

As illustrated in FIG. 23, object beam units 700 and reference beam-steering systems 400 may be fixed to bases 326.

As illustrated in FIGs. 24 and 25, one or more object beam units 700 may be fixedly mounted to unit mounts 328 which are fixedly mounted to second holder movable 20 supports 322 of a x-translation stage 680. Similarly, one or more reference beam-steering systems 400 may be fixedly mounted to other unit mounts 328 which are fixedly mounted to other second holder movable supports 322 of another x-translation stage 680. In addition, in some embodiments, a frame 324 may be fixed to the first movable supports 312 of a y-translation stage 690. Thus, in some embodiments, the holographic recording 25 material 70 clamped between two frames 324 may translate vertically, while the object beam units 700 and reference beam-steering systems 400 translate horizontally.

In the embodiment depicted in FIG. 24, two motors 320, which are controlled by holder motor controller 305, drive the second holder driven lead screws 319 of the x-translation stages 680. In an alternative embodiment depicted in FIG. 25, one motor 30 320, in combination with a timing belt 330 that is linked to a belt mount 332 that is fixedly attached to one of the second holder driven lead screws 319, drives both second holder driven lead screws 319 of the x-translation stages 680.

In another embodiment depicted in FIG. 26, the object beam units 700 and reference beam-steering systems 400 are attached to unit mounts 328 which are attached

5 to the second holder movable supports 322 of x-translation stages 680. A holographic recording material 70 translates vertically by a y-axis roller system 350 with rollers 342 and 344. The holographic recording material 70 may be wrapped around a top roller 342 and a bottom roller 344. The top and bottom rollers 342 and 344 are rotatably mounted by bushing, bearing, or other suitable means between roller end plates 340. The top roller
10 342 may be rotated by a motor for the rollers 346, which is controlled by a motor controller 305 which is controlled by a computer 230.

The motors used in the various embodiments of the translation systems may be, but are not limited to stepper motors.

As depicted in FIGs. 23-26, there may be simultaneous or parallel printing of
15 elemental holograms. In some embodiments, the printer may include object beam units and reference beam-steering systems attached to translation systems with x-translation stages that are attached to y-translation stages. In such systems, the holographic recording material may be fixed, while the object beam units and reference beam-steering systems are moved by the translation system to record an array of elemental holograms.

20 In an alternative embodiment, multiple layers of holographic recording material 70 may be held in a material holder 300. In addition, each layer may be sensitive to a particular wavelength of light.

In another embodiment of the present invention, for a given object beam, a matched set of a band-limited diffusers 45 and a reference beam masking plate 65 may be
25 configured to allow for even exposure of an elemental hologram 110 of a particular size or shape and to prevent exposing portions of the holographic recording material 70 that are not part of the elemental hologram 110 intended to be exposed. As illustrated by FIGs. 27(a), (b), and (c), matched sets of band-limited diffusers 45 and reference beam masking plates 65 can be constructed to allow the exposure of elemental holograms 110
30 of different sizes or shapes. If the sets of band-limited diffusers 45 and reference beam masking plates 65 are constructed such that the band-limited diffusers 45 of all the sets have the same outer dimensions and can be placed in the same position in a hologram printer, and such that the reference beam masking plates 65 of all the sets have the same outer dimensions and can be placed in the same position in a hologram printer, then sets

5 can be conveniently switched to easily change the size of the elemental hologram printed. Thus, a matched set of a band-limited diffuser 45 and a reference beam masking plate 65 can be replaced with another set of a band-limited diffuser 45 and a reference beam masking plate 65 so as to allow printing of a larger, smaller, or differently shaped elemental hologram. As depicted in FIG. 27(b), a band-limited diffuser 45 may be
10 mounted onto a plate 510 housed in a threaded frame 515. The plate 510 may be a sheet transparent sheet of glass with an anti-reflective coating. The threaded frame 515 may be threaded into positioning device 525 which has a base 526 and a threaded ring 520. The positioning device 520 may allow translational adjustment in three orthogonal directions by three adjustable screws 530. As depicted in FIG. 27(c), a reference beam masking
15 plate 65 may be housed in a threaded plate frame 560. A threaded plate frame 560 may be threaded into a threaded positioning device 565.

Some examples of full-color embossments of the present invention are depicted in FIGs. 7, 8, 19, and 21. Another embodiment of the present invention includes a full-color printer with three different colored lasers, optical combiners, such as but not limited
20 to dichroic combiners, to combine the three beams from the lasers, a full-color SLM, and achromatic optics to print full-color holographic stereograms. Still another embodiment of the present invention includes a full-color printer with three different colored lasers, an object beam unit that combines three object beams using three band-limited diffusers, three gray-scale SLMs, and an optical combiner, achromatic optics, such as achromatic
25 lenses, to manipulate or condition the full-color beams produced by the printer, and an optical combiner to combine three reference beams into a combined, full-color, reference beam. Yet another embodiment of the present invention includes a full-color printer with three different colored lasers, an object beam unit with an HOE that combines three different colored object beams into one combined, full-color, object beam and that also
30 evenly distributes the combined object beam over an elemental hologram, an optical combiner to combine three reference beams into a combined, full-color, reference beam, and achromatic optics to manipulate or condition the full-colored beams.

Another aspect of the present invention involves a method of creating animated, one-step, full-parallax, holographic stereograms. One embodiment involves using

5 multiple or sub-divided viewing zones, which typically are not needed to produce static
image, full-parallax holographic stereograms, to produce one-step, full-parallax,
holographic stereograms that can display animated subjects or different images through
different viewing zones. Viewing zones are typically planar areas located at a distance
10 plane could see the holographic image produced by an array of elemental holograms.
Thus, a viewing zone may be analogous to a window in front of a hologram. However,
rather than being planar, viewing zones may also be constructed from a series of points.
Unlike traditional techniques for producing one-step, full-parallax holographic
stereograms in which the view of a three-dimensional object or a scene is determined for
15 each elemental hologram, the present invention produces animated, one-stop, full-
parallax holographic stereograms by determining the view of an object or scene that an
observer would see in each viewing zone.

Referring to **FIGs. 28-31**, and assuming that a voxel-control lens **500** is used such
that the image **505** (shown in **FIG. 10(b)**) of an SLM would appear at an infinite distance
20 from the surface of the holographic recording material, the steps for producing a
holographic element of an animated holographic stereogram or a holographic stereogram
that displays different images in different viewing zones are as follows.

- 1) Select the size and shape of a holographic stereogram, and the size and
shape of its elemental holograms.
- 25 2) Select the desired effect. One example of an effect is changing the
orientation of an object or a scene (*e.g.*, its position or rotation) when a
viewer moves. Another example of an effect is changing the shape or
color of an object or a scene when a viewer moves.
- 3) Select the reference illumination geometry for the final holographic
30 stereogram.
- 4) Select the shape(s), size(s), and location(s) of the viewing zone or zones
with respect to the holographic recording material. In the plane of the
viewing zone, a viewer would see a sharper transition between the
different objects or scenes depicted by the holographic stereogram than a

- 5 viewer not in the plane of the viewing zones. Thus, it may be desirable to select the location of the viewing zones to be at a distance from the holographic recording material where most viewers would be located.
- 5) Select the objects or scenes or the attributes of the objects or scenes to be displayed by the holographic stereogram.
- 10 6) Select the location and placement with respect to the holographic recording material of the holographic images of the objects that will be displayed by the holographic stereogram to be created (*i.e.* whether the image will be located in front of, in back of, or straddle the holographic recording material).
- 15 7) Using a computer 230, generate computer models and model attributes for each viewing zone using traditional computer graphic techniques and programs of the objects or scenes. For instance, generate a computer model of an object 'A' 835 which can only be seen from one viewing zone 805, and generate a computer model of an object 'B' 840 which can only be seen from another viewing zone 810.
- 20 8) Set up the hologram printer. For instance, put holographic recording material 70 (shown in FIG. 7) into a material holder 300 (shown in FIG. 7), calibrate and initialize beam shutters 225 (shown in FIG. 7), motor controllers 305, 455 the SLM 90 (shown in FIG. 7), the beam-steering system 400 (shown in FIG. 7), and initialize the computer graphics program, and the computer 230 (shown in FIG. 7).
- 25 9) Using a computer 230, for each elemental hologram 110 in a holographic stereogram that may be a one-step, full-parallax, holographic stereogram:
- 30 A) Project lines from the perimeter of the elemental hologram 110 through the perimeter of each of the view zones 805 and 810. Since in a typical printer, a SLM is usually centered in front of an elemental hologram when the elemental hologram is exposed, the virtual image of the SLM that an elemental hologram would see through a voxel-control lens is also usually centered in front of the

5 elemental hologram, as shown in FIG. 29. As depicted in FIG.
30, the projected lines intersect a virtual two-dimensional image
505 (shown in FIG. 10(b)) of a SLM image. The elemental
hologram will only see the portion of the virtual image 505 of the
SLM, such as 815 or 820, bounded by the projecting lines. As
10 shown in FIG. 30, the projected lines define mask volumes 825,
830, which may differ from one elemental hologram to another for
a given viewing zone.

15 B) For a desired viewing zone mask volume, such as 825, for an
elemental hologram 110, using traditional rendering techniques,
such as but not limited to, ray-tracing or scan-line conversion,
render the portion of the appropriate computer model of an object
or scene 835 (shown in FIG. 30) enclosed by the projected mask
volume 825 to create a complete two-dimensional image of a
projection on the portion of the virtual image 505 of the SLM of
20 the computer graphic models of the objects or scenes 835 or 840
from the perspective of an elemental hologram. For instance, if a
person were to look at a particular elemental hologram from within
a mask volume 825, only the 'A' object 835 is seen. From mask
volume 825, the 'B' object 840 is not viewable. Thus, to a viewer
in mask volume 825, the bottom of the virtual image of the SLM is
25 not visible. Similarly, if a person were to look at the particular
elemental hologram from within a mask volume 830, only the 'B'
object 840 is seen. From mask volume 830, the 'A' object 835 is
not viewable. Thus, to a viewer in mask volume 830, the top of the
virtual image of the SLM is not visible.

30 C) When rendering is complete for all the viewing zones 805 and 810
for an elemental hologram, composite the rendered images for the
viewing zones.

- 5 D) Display the composite rendered image for the viewing zones 805
and 810 on the SLM 70 and allow light to pass through the beam
shutters 225 for the proper time period to expose the elemental
hologram.
- 10 E) Translate the material holder such that another elemental hologram
can be exposed.
- F) Repeat steps A through E until all the elemental holograms have
been exposed.

15 In an alternative embodiment, rendering for multiple elemental holograms may be
completed before exposing any of the elemental holograms on a holographic recording
material.

20 In an alternative embodiment, the same method applied for creating holographic
stereograms with changing views may be used to create a holographic optical element
(HOE). For instance, if it is desirable to create a HOE that acts like a lens to converge
diverging white light to a point, then by using the same viewing zone method as
described, but determining a view point located at where the light should be focused,
rather than a view zone, a HOE may be created. Alternatively, such a HOE can be
created by determining a white computer-graphic object with the exact size, shape, and
position of a given voxel, and printing a holographic stereogram of such an object.

25 In one embodiment of the present invention, the same computer 230 may be
programmed to control the motors controlling the beam shutters, the motor controllers for
the beam-steering mirror system, the motor controllers for the translation systems,
conducts the computer graphics creation and rendering, and controls the display of the
SLM. In an alternative embodiment, the same computer may also conduct the
computations necessary for animation. The computer 230 may be connected to the beam
30 shutters, the motor controllers for the beam-steering mirror system, and the SLM, through
cables connected at both ends to serial or parallel communication ports. One end of the
cables may be connected to the communication ports of the computer and the other ends
of the cables may be connected to the devices controlled by the computer. In other
embodiments, multiple computers 230 may be used.

5 While the methods and apparatus of this invention have been described in terms
of illustrated embodiments, it will be apparent to those of skill in the art that variations,
such as but not limited to different combination of lens set-ups to create the same effect
as the voxel-control lens or the beam-steering lenses described herein, may be applied to
the methods and apparatus and in the step or in the sequence of steps of the methods
10 described herein without departing from the concept, spirit and scope of the invention.
All substitutes and modifications apparent to those skilled in the art are deemed to be
within the spirit, scope and concept of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

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